

Air Corps, for his flight to the North Pole. The contributions of these great aviators and those that followed are honored by this prestigious award.

In 1994 the Distinguished Flying Cross Society was formed as a nonprofit organization whose members have been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. The Society has established scholarships and benefits for organizations and individuals throughout the Nation that are seeking to make advances in aviation.

In February of this year the Distinguished Flying Cross Society officially recognized a new chapter, the Las Vegas Wings Chapter in Southern Nevada. The great State of Nevada is home to more than 260,000 veterans many of which have been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. As a member of Congress and a Nevadan, I would like to extend a heartfelt welcome, to the Las Vegas Wings Chapter, of the Distinguished Flying Cross Society.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and heartfelt gratitude that I salute these great American heroes and the Las Vegas Wings Chapter of the Distinguished Flying Cross Society.

A TRIBUTE TO DR. WALTER RODNEY—REMEMBERING A TRUE CARIBBEAN INTELLECTUAL

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 4, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the legacy and memory of Dr. Walter Rodney, an eloquent teacher, writer, scholar and political activist who left this world much too soon at the young age of 38 years and to enter into the RECORD an essay written in the New York CaribNews by Michael D. Roberts entitled "Celebrating the 64th Birthday of Dr. Walter Rodney—Remembering A True Caribbean Intellectual—From Humble Beginnings to International Stature."

Dr. Walter Rodney was born in Guyana on March 23, 1942, and at an early age, excelled academically. After graduating from the University of the West Indies, he enrolled at the London University and at the age of 24, was awarded a Ph.D.

Walter Rodney an avid political activist was involved in the Guyanese labor movement and headed up the Working People's Alliance. His political views were strongly influenced by the Black Power and Black Consciousness Movements in the U.S. and Caribbean, respectively. Of particular scholarly interest to Rodney was the economic history of Guyana, and the legacy of slavery and colonialism in Africa. He inaugurated extensive research into the history of economic exploitation in Africa. He traveled and studied with teaching assignments in Tanzania and Guinea, Africans in Guyana trace their roots to Guinea.

The results of his travels and research were three remarkable books: *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800*, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, and *Groundings with My Brothers*. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* offered a Marxist analysis of the impact of colonialism and capitalism in under developing Africa and, consequently, the African world.

Though he traveled extensively throughout the world, Dr. Rodney's base of operations from 1974 until its death was in Guyana. He

continued to lecture and organize the people of his homeland. He joined the Working People's Alliance, WPC, of Guyana which later became an independent Marxist political party in 1979.

There is so much more to say about the life and legacy of Walter Rodney. He was a profound intellectual and worldly scholar who had so much left to share with the world when he was silenced by death. Sadly, Walter Rodney was killed by a car bomb in Guyana on June 13, 1980. His murder remains unsolved.

Walter Rodney was a true Caribbean Intellectual whose reach was boundless. I shudder to think of the difference he would have made in the world had he lived. On this anniversary of his birthday I honor his memory.

CELEBRATING THE 64TH BIRTHDAY OF DR. WALTER RODNEY: REMEMBERING A TRUE CARIBBEAN INTELLECTUAL

(An Essay By Michael D. Roberts)

My first encounter with Dr. Walter Rodney was in 1979 when he came to Grenada during the very early days of the Grenada Revolution since he was literally barred from entering Guyana his country of birth. A slim, unassuming man Walter Rodney was unpretentious and looked almost nerdy with heavy horned-rimmed glasses. He sported a large "Afro" hairstyle and was the first person I met who wore African clothes. During that year and up to April 1980 whenever he was in Grenada I would spend time with him since his remarkable brain and sheer brilliance was fascinating to me. Walter had the gift of simplifying many complex things and he would ask a question and then based on my response would open up an entire period of conversation based on analysis, discussion, point and counter-point. He was an excellent teacher, an adept debater and skilled analyst.

Had he not been murdered he would have been 64 years old today and one could only wonder what this true Caribbean intellectual would have accomplished. Walter Rodney was born on March 23, 1942, and was murdered in Georgetown, Guyana, on June 12, 1980, ironically not far from Bent Street where his parents lived and where he grew up as a child.

He attended Guyana primary school and from the start was an extremely gifted student. To many who knew him it was clear that he was unique. He first won a scholarship to Queens College in Guyana and then another one to further his studies at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica. He graduated with first-class honors in History and again won an open scholarship to the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Walter graduated from that institution with a doctorate at the tender age of 24 years.

Never losing his working class roots Walter Rodney soon embraced the principles of Marxism. It is this Marxist methodology that would be used to write his thesis that was published as a piercing analytical work "A History of the Upper Guinea Coast 1545–1800" and "How Europe Under-Developed Africa" considered today one of the most important books on British colonialism and its effects on the African continent and Third World development and underdevelopment as a whole.

After graduation Walter left for Tanzania to take up a teaching position and then came back to Jamaica in 1968 to teach at the University of the West Indies. It was while there that he started to study the Rastafarian socio-historical phenomenon and wrote a book that is today considered one of the definitive works on the movement called "Groundings with My Brothers." This book

is a collection of talks that he gave in Jamaica and highlighted Walter's admiration for the working class and his ability to connect with those that society deemed unimportant and non-conformist.

I remember one incident in Grenada that would help to further explain his life-long fascination and respect for the grassroots people among whom he was most comfortable and at home. In the end it would be this ability to connect with people and to make a lasting impression on them that would be feared and hated by his political enemies and which would lead to his assassination. The Governments in Guyana and the Caribbean did not only fear Walter Rodney's amazing intellect but his easy, sincerity that made people gravitate to him.

One day we were driving on the Eastern coast of Grenada heading for the country's second largest town, Grenville. We stopped at a village named Birchgrove for a while and I left to see a friend at the Police station. Walter had two bodyguards with him and a few minutes later they came to me worried sick that he was nowhere to be found and maybe he'd given them the slip.

I then led a search for Walter in the shops and parlors in the village since Walter was fond of going to where ordinary people congregated to speak to them and ask questions so he could learn more about them. By then I was used to his ways. But search as we may we could not find him. Then I heard loud laughter coming from the Birchgrove River and decided to check it out.

There sitting comfortably on a river stone and surrounded by about 20 women, some bare-chested, some in the river washing, was Walter Rodney. When we arrived on the scene he flashed his usual sly grin and continued speaking with the washers—all wives of farmers and children of working people.

We spent more than an hour listening to Walter exchange conversation with whom Granada's deceased Prime Minister Maurice Bishop used to call "the salt of the earth."

That was Walter he'd take a complex topic as economics and tailor it to suit the washers and presented it in words that they understood. He interjected humor and practical day-to-day experiences that they related to in an effective methodology for educating "his people" as he called them.

In Guyana there has been the problem that historically the working class has always been divided mainly because of the manipulation of the planter class. The Indians were introduced into the society specifically to counter and break the development of the Black working class movement that arose in opposition to conditions after the end of slavery.

So it is not simply as though Africans and Indians co-existed without any relation one to the other. Economic competition between Africans and Indians was deliberately created within the construct of the old capitalist order.

In 1974 Walter Rodney decided to return to Guyana and take up an appointment at the University of Guyana. Of course, the Forbes Burnham government promptly scuttled his appointment as Professor of History. That same year he joined the Working people's Alliance that became a political party in July of 1979—five months after the Grenada Revolution of March 13, 1979. That same month he was arrested, along with seven other people, for allegedly burning down Government offices. It would be this incident that would propel him to the top of Guyanese politics and ultimately seal his fate. From that time on Walter's life was on the line as threats, harassment and intimidation continued from the Burnham regime that became more and more obsessed with a man that Guyanese across the board saw as the replacement to Linden Forbes Burnham.

Under these oppressive conditions the Burnham Government reacted more and more with violence to a restless population now growing fed up with the paramount leader's shenanigans and political grandstanding. Walter was unapologetic about his political work and saw it as rendering a service to the people of Guyana. He was well aware that the Burnham regime was out to get him since President Burnham had allegedly told him to make his will.

Certainly among progressive circles in the Caribbean Walter was told that he should not go to Guyana since his life would be in real danger and that the Government would stop at nothing to destroy him.

But Walter accepted this as part of the price that he was willing to pay for the liberation of the people of Guyana.

On the evening of June 13, 1980 Walter Rodney was assassinated by a bomb placed in a walkie-talkie and detonated remotely. He left behind his wife, Patricia and three children. The Caribbean and Africa lost a gifted intellectual and a skilled political leader.

RECOGNIZING JUDGE RICHARD A. BENNETT OF NAPA, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 4, 2006

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Judge Richard A. Bennett as he retires after serving 20 years on the courts of Napa County, California.

Judge Bennett's extraordinary judicial leadership both on and off the bench not only improved the lives of thousands of Napa Valley residents and families, it saved many of them. Whether it was in small claims, family court, felony trials or his landmark efforts within Napa's Adult Drug Court, he had a gift of focusing on the human element that connects all of us. No one understood better than Judge Bennett the forces that can break families and communities apart as well as the common bonds that can be used to repair both.

It was this understanding of how important our bonds are to each other and to our community that enabled Judge Bennett to amass a remarkable record of reaching far more agreements than impasses in his court. And Mr. Speaker, it is this understanding that is unfortunately all too rare on our national stage today.

At a time when our political discourse has devolved to a level of partisan stagnation, our national leaders can learn a great deal from Judge Bennett and the community he has so proudly and effectively served over these past 20 years. He has built a foundation of co-operation, integrity and compassion that will continue to benefit many generations of Napa Valley residents long after his robe is retired.

Richard Bennett was born in Virginia and moved to my hometown of St. Helena at age 14 with his parents Larry and Doda. A graduate of the distinguished University of California Hastings College of Law, he practiced family law before being appointed to the Napa County Municipal Court by Governor George Deukmejian in 1985. He later became the first Presiding Judge of the Consolidated Municipal and Superior Courts for Napa County in 1993.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, because of the many contributions Judge Bennett has made

to our community and nation, it is fitting and appropriate that we honor him today as he retires from the Superior Court of Napa County and extend our best wishes to him and his family. Though he may be leaving the bench, I am confident that he will continue to provide leadership in Napa County for many years to come.

HONORING 65 YEARS OF AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 4, 2006

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, last week, I introduced a bipartisan resolution, along with my dear friends and colleagues, Representatives TOM REYNOLDS, CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, and LOUISE SLAUGHTER, to recognize the cultural and educational contributions of American Ballet Theatre throughout its 65 years of service as "America's National Ballet Company."

Sixty-five years ago, American Ballet Theatre was formed to fulfill two essential missions: Become one of the world's great ballet companies and bring classical dance to communities who typically are not able to experience world-class ballet.

Now, 65 years later, ABT has brought world-class dance to America and American dance to the world, including performances in 126 cities throughout all 50 states and 42 countries, often as representatives of the State Department.

Dwight D. Eisenhower recognized the important role of American Ballet Theatre over 40 years ago, stating that ABT brings "some measure of understanding of America's cultural environment and inspiration" to audiences through the medium of ballet.

ABT's mission extends beyond the pursuit of artistic greatness. ABT's extensive educational outreach programs include the award-winning Make a Ballet program, which inspires and empowers at-risk students by guiding them through the entire process of staging their own ballet. From choreography, costumes and performance to lighting, marketing and concessions, Make a Ballet has served students in the New York City region for over a decade; now, ABT is bringing Make a Ballet on tour to communities like Washington, DC, Los Angeles, Chicago and Cleveland.

For 65 years, American Ballet Theatre has entertained, inspired and educated thousands and thousands of people across the country and the world. I am proud to represent this important institution and thank my colleagues for joining me in celebrating the past 65 years with ABT. We all look forward to the next 65 years.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF GERARD FRANCIS SCHIAPPA

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 4, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Gerard Francis

Schiappa, director of federal relations for Turner Construction and former administrative assistant to Congressman Louis C. Wyman, who died of cancer March 17, in his home in Potomac Falls. Gerry was 67 years old.

Gerry, who had a 50-year career in government affairs, also was special counsel to former Secretary of the Navy J. William Middendorf II from 1975 to 1976 during the Ford Administration. He began his career as an elevator operator and mailroom clerk in the U.S. House of Representatives. After serving in the Army, Mr. Schiappa returned to the House, where he served on the staffs of Representatives Arch A. Moore (R-W.Va.), Joe Skubitz (R-Kan.), William C. Cramer (R-Fla.) and finally Louis C. Wyman (R-N.H.).

As Congressman Wyman's Chief of Staff, Gerry had a reputation on Capitol Hill as a brilliant political tactician who knew how to get things done. His counsel to Congressman Wyman, who served on the House Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations, helped save the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard from closure in the early 1970s. He served as a principal coordinator for Congressman Wyman's U.S. Senate campaign against John Durkin, a Democrat, in a 1975 runoff election, which is known as the closest Senate race in U.S. history.

Gerry left public service in 1978 to join the Panax Corp. as its Vice President of Public Affairs. He founded a lobbying firm, the Capital Group, in 1981 and served as its president and chief executive until 1996. In 1997, he became managing partner of Middendorf & Associates.

Gerry was born the third of 10 children in Scranton, Pa. He grew up in Mount Rainier, graduated from Northwestern High School in Hyattsville and attended Capitol Page School in Washington. He also attended Emerson Preparatory School and the University of Maryland.

He served on the executive finance committee of the 1981 and 1985 Presidential Inaugural Committees, and President Ronald Reagan's 1981 Presidential Transition Office for Intelligence Operations. He also served on the boards of numerous organizations, including the Educational Film Center and Prevision Corp. He was also a member of the Washington Performing Arts Society, ALS Association of Washington, Great Falls Citizens Association, Defense Forum Foundation and the Reagan Alumni Association.

Of all his accomplishments, Gerry was most proud of being a mentor to countless young men and women eager to begin their professional careers. John Dean, former White House counsel, wrote in his autobiography that Gerry helped him get his first job in government. Gerry is survived by his wife of 41 years, Jane Thompson Schiappa of Potomac Falls; two children, Brien Schiappa-Dunn and John Schiappa, both of Potomac Falls; a brother; eight sisters; and one granddaughter.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Gerard Schiappa on the floor of the House today.